

PETE'S BABETTE

By IZOLA L. FORRESTER

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There had always been Pete. At least so the people down at St. Michel said when a stranger would ask where he had come from. Even before the government had built the lighthouse on Presque Isle Pete's fishing hut had been there, and every night he had hung out his lantern on the end of a pole so that the boats rounding the point a mile or two below would see its flicker and steer clear of the long sand bar that ran out like an ant's nose from the northern corner of Presque Isle.

Everybody along the strait knew the quaint old figure, but no one knew of Babette until they saw her one morning flitting along behind Pete, her red calico dress the one bright spot of color among the grays and browns of Presque Isle. The day before Pete had been seen rowing over to the Mackinac shore, but no one knew of his return except Mere M'rie, and she was so old and deaf that all she could do was cook Pete's fish and sit out in the sunshine all day smoking in the kitchen doorway.

When Landry Dubois from Algonac Island asked the question direct, Pete smiled and shook his head, his dark eyes, deep set in the small brown face, watching Babette build houses with the red bark chips around the lighthouse steps.

"She has no one but me," he said, with a dubious shrug of his thin, stooped shoulders. "Babette, who art thou, petite?"

Babette stopped playing long enough to flash a merry glance at him under the shelter of her thick brown hair.

"Pete's Babette," she laughed. And so, all through the isles of the strait, as far as St. Ignace and even down to Mackinaw, she was known as Pete's Babette. Pete taught her all manner of wonderful things in fish lore and shipcraft, and before long she knew all the boats that passed by Presque Isle from the great iron kings and grain boats bound for Buffalo to the gay little yachts that flitted like white butterflies here and there. But, best of all, she loved the schooners, the old monarchs of the lake, when they came sailing up the strait on a still summer's eve, like wondrous phantom ships, with the glory of the sunset behind, and she called them Babette's birds.

And the years passed by, ten of them, slow and sure and steady, one by one, as the wild geese fly to the southland, and each one left Pete brown and more wrinkled and smaller, while Babette grew up tall and slender and strong as a young pine tree, with hair and eyes brown as dry oak leaves. Then came the terrible winter of '94, when boat after boat went out on the lakes and no more was heard from them until spring waves brought in the wreckage. It was cold at the little, low house back of the lighthouse on Presque Isle, colder than even Pete could remember, and every week it was harder for him to row down to St. Michel for provisions.

One night he came home half frozen and with a dreadful cough. Babette sent him to bed and said he should go no more. They must make what food they had last until warmer weather. But instead of sunshine and fair seas the clouds swept low and gray like gulls before a storm, and the waves came rolling in, with a deep, heavy swell that sent a dull, threatening roar as they broke, up to the lighthouse. And here and there in the dark green waters could be seen something else, a clumsy, swaying mass that glinted blue white.

"The ice has come," Babette thought when she saw it from the lighthouse window one morning after she had trimmed the lamp, and there was a queer ache in her heart as she looked off down the strait and thought of how her birds would have to battle with it, but she did not tell Pete.

It was three days later when Mere M'rie showed her the empty meal bag. She smiled. There were still bacon and rice and dried fish. They were rich. At the end of the week there was no bacon, and they had saved the last of the rice for Pete, who lay on the old lounge near the stove coughing, coughing all the time.

The following day Pete was delirious. Babette stood in the old kitchen, looking from the flushed, wrinkled face on the pillow to where Mere M'rie knelt over by the stove praying. The provisions were gone. There was no medicine.

Babette took the fur jacket from its nail. Before she went out of the kitchen she leaned over the old half-breed woman's bent form. "To St. Michel," she said slowly, pointing eastward and then at the empty meal sack and flour bag thrown in a corner. Mere M'rie understood and stopped her praying long enough to watch the strong, erect young figure pass down to the shore, the wind blowing the ends of her scarf backward over her shoulders like red wings.

Her hands worked quickly over the lines of the boat, and, taking advantage of a momentary lull, she pushed away from the small, tumbled down pier and struck out bravely for St. Michel. She had often been out with Pete when the waves were as high as now, and she loved the excitement of it all. The low, flat shore of Presque Isle vanished entirely behind the wall of waters, but she could catch a glimpse of the dear old lighthouse and its round top above the tallest wave,

and the sight strengthened and nerved her for the five mile journey to St. Michel.

Suddenly, when scarcely half a mile out, the boat seemed to strike a new current. Babette caught her breath sharply as she felt the strong, irresistible power sweep her from her course, and she bent over the oars with set, close lips and tense muscles, but it was useless. The deep, swelling rush of waters carried her northward, straight on to the middle channel of the strait. The wind had come up again and raged over the lake like a wild beast. Then, without warning, there rose before her the jagged, cruel line of the ice floe, and the next moment the waves had thrown the boat as if it had been a leaf full upon it. Instinctively Babette had risen at that last awful instant. As the boat crashed into the ice with a shock that made it leap and tremble she sprang forward and gained a footing on the ice floe, a slight, perilous one, to be sure, but one that meant safety for the moment at least.

Already the little boat had disappeared in the whirlpool of dashing waters, and Babette's heart beat fast as she looked about her on her new craft. It was large; it seemed as large as Presque Isle itself, and at first appeared stationary. But when she had reached its center she could feel the slow, steady motion as it swept on toward Lake Huron.

And now came the division of the channel, and Babette's heart almost stopped its frightened beating as she thought of what would happen if the floe drifted north of Algonac Island and out on the great pitiless waters of the lake.

With hushed breath she waited. The floe was heaving so that she could hardly retain her place, but at last the pine crests of Algonac showed on her left, and she knew she would pass St. Michel. With fingers stiffened by the cold she untied the red scarf from about her head and let the wind blow it like a danger signal above her as she caught a glimpse of the lighthouse on the west pier. So near, it seemed, she placed her hand to her mouth and shouted, but her voice sounded like a reedbird's pipe in the noise of the rushing waters.

She was opposite the town now. She could see the waves break on the pier, and yet there was no sign of help. With a fearlessness born of desperation she struggled to her feet and waved the scarf wildly, and suddenly a figure appeared on the lighthouse ladder. Again she waved and tried to call. The figure signaled back and ran along the pier toward town.

It was Landry Dubois. He burst into the warm back room at old Mme. Porteau's breathless and hatless.

"It is Pete's Babette," he cried to the crowd of fishermen and sailors huddled about the big wood stove. "She is on the ice, drifting out to the lake."

In five minutes the news had spread, and the shore was crowded, while the strongest boat in the place was manned, with Landry at the rudder, and stout arms pulled away to the rescue of Pete's Babette. And when they brought her back half frozen and half dead and gave her into Mme. Porteau's care she told her errand in the warm back room—told how Pete lay dying without food or medicine and how unless help was sent there would be no light shining from Presque Isle that night.

"The light shall shine," promised Landry, and the waves that had laughed at Babette's little boat bowed before the masterful stroke of ten pairs of St. Michel's strongest arms as they manned the boat that bore Babette and provisions and medicine back to Presque Isle.

"Thou hast saved his life, little one," said Landry, when they stood in the kitchen where Mere M'rie still prayed. But Babette only smiled and nodded her head, and she went on to the lighthouse.

The winter twilight was falling swiftly, and the wind had gone down like one tired with its mad play. Far to the west she could see a boat struggling slowly up the strait, its lights gleaming now and then like jewels. She lit the lamp with fingers that trembled, and the broad path of light streamed out over the point. Babette's birds could fly in safety tonight, and below Landry Dubois held aloft a red scarf and told its story, even as it is told today around the islands of the strait—the story of Pete's Babette.

When Ladies Wore Masks.

In the seventeenth century ladies wore masks in public, and great was the variety of face screens that were seen. Ladies who had "coraline" lips preferred them short, as was natural; for others who wished to hide the lower part of the face the mask was completed by a chin piece of linen, which afterward passed under the chin and over the ears. In 1632, says M. Engerand, a new mask called the *masque*, from the Italian *maschera*, was all the rage and threatened to usurp the place of the black one. It was even the cause of violent quarrels between the ladies who held to the latter and those who preferred the latest novelty. Some years later it became the fashion to trim the upper part of the mask with a ruche of lace, to lengthen it with a beard of the same material and even to cover it more or less with lace to the borders of the eyebrows. Young ladies of this period, however, frequently contented themselves with covering the face simply with a piece of black crape for coquetry's sake and to appear the fairer.

A Bitter Retort.

"Do you think," he asked, "that you could learn to love me?"

"I don't know," she answered. "I might, but if I were a man I'd hate to think that I was an acquired taste."—Chicago Record-Herald.

CATCHING A THIEF.

An Old Method Utilized by a German Officer in China.

Thirty dollars was stolen at the Officers' club in Tientsin, China, and the members of the club resolved, if possible, to catch the thief.

A German captain volunteered to manage the affair, and the first thing he did was to summon all the native servants of the club. He then said to them:

"Some money has been stolen here, and I am looking for the thief. I shall find him in an hour, not before, since I need that much time in order to get instructions from a celebrated magician in Germany."

An hour later all the servants were again summoned, but this time into a dark room, in the middle of which stood the table on which the money stolen had been laid.

"Each of you, now," said the officer, "must go up to that table and press on it first your right and then your left hand, and when that is done you must raise your two hands over your head and step into the next room."

The servants did so, and as the last one stepped into the adjoining room the officer followed him, and after looking for a few moments at the many uplifted hands he pointed to one man and said, "You are the thief." The Chinaman to whom he pointed nearly fell to the ground with fright and admitted his guilt and promised to make restitution.

Very simple was the method adopted by the officer for discovering the culprit. While the native servants supposed that his spirit was in Germany in communion with the celebrated magician he was carefully smearing the surface of the table in the dark room with fat and oil, which he then blackened by means of soot. The innocent servants naturally pressed their hands on the table, according to his instructions, but the culprit, though superstitious, did not do so.

As a result, while the uplifted hands of all the others were coal black, his were of a natural color, and thus his guilt was clearly proved.—Detroit Free Press.

Licking Her Stamps.

We find the following anecdotes in a Naples paper: "At the postoffice yesterday, amid the large crowd gathered around the window, was a young English lady, handsome, well dressed and accompanied by her maid. The young lady had just purchased some stamps and was about to affix them to a number of letters which she held in her hand. Delicately tearing off a stamp, she said to her maid, 'Pull (sic) out your tongue.' And the maid, with English impassivity, thrust forth her tongue, while the mistress passed over it a postage stamp, which she subsequently stuck on a letter. She went through the entire package of letters, and for each one the obedient waiting maid thrust out her tongue for the mistress to moisten the stamp. Curious manners these English people have."

The Canon and the Lawyer.

The point of the following story lies in the important part which the "three-penny bit" plays in church collections in England. Canon Blank was having a friendly game of pool at the squire's, and one of his opponents was Wigby, the barrister. The canon lost a "life" and took from his pocket a three-penny piece to pay for it, which he placed on the edge of the table.

"Oh," said Wigby, "I see, canon, you have had your finger in the plate?" The canon drew himself up to his full height, a good six feet, and, looking the man of the law full in the face, said, "I'm surprised that you, Mr. Wigby, in the presence of this respectable company, have the audacity to recognize your own paltry contribution."

Lamps That Talk.

Electric lamps not only can be made to talk, but also to sing. An ordinary arc light can be made to produce sounds in two ways. One is by placing the arc in the circuit of a telephone instead of the ordinary receiver, and the other is by placing it in the circuit instead of the ordinary transmitter.

In either of these positions it will pronounce words, which can be heard distinctly at a considerable distance. It naturally follows, also, that the electric arc can be utilized as the receiver and also as the transmitter of a telephone.

The French Horn.

The French horn or cor de chasse is regarded by some musicians as the sweetest and mellowest of all the wind instruments. In Beethoven's time it was little else than the old hunting horn, which, for the convenience of the mounted hunter, was arranged in spiral convolutions, to be slipped over the head and carried resting on one shoulder and under the opposite arm. The Germans still call it the *waldhorn*—that is, "forest horn."

Actors' Superstitions.

To rehearse a play on Sunday is a sure sign that that play will not be a success for the manager ordering the rehearsal and that salaries will be lost by all who so participate on the Lord's day. To twirl a chair at rehearsals is just as good as betting on a sure thing that a fight will disrupt the friendship of at least two members and perhaps cause loss to the management for that week.

The Bluejay.

One may pet or patronize, according to one's nature, a chipping sparrow, bluebird or phoebe, but he is indeed well coated with self-esteem who does not feel a sense of inferiority in the presence of a jay. He is such a shrewd, independent and aggressive creature that one is inevitably led to the belief that he is more of a success

as a bird than most men are as men. Conspicuous by voice and action during the fall and winter, when other birds are quietest, he becomes silent when other birds are most vocal. If he has a love song, it is reserved for the ear of his mate. At this season he even controls his fondness for owl baiting and with it his vituperative gifts. The robin, the catbird and the thrasher seem eager to betray the location of their nests to every passerby, but the bluejay gives no evidence of the site of his habitation by being seen in its vicinity.—Frank M. Chapman in Century.

The Explanation.

Knock—I sat down in my easy chair last night and picked up that new novel of Scribner's and I didn't get to bed until 4 this morning.

Cox—The idea! Why, I thought it awfully tiresome.

Knock—Exactly! It was nearly 4 o'clock when I woke up in my chair.

Rivals.

"Why don't that romantic star and that emotional actress get a divorce if they can't become reconciled?"

"They have discussed the idea, but each is afraid the other might get the best of the advertisement.—Washington Star.

Her Mother.

Jack—Charley, why don't you propose to the Widow Green's daughter? She's rich and is regarded as the pearl of her sex.

Charley—I know it, my boy, but I dislike the mother of pearl.—Exchange.

True to German Cooking.

He was a stalwart young German, and as he walked into the barn he saluted its owner with, "Hey, mister, will you jop me?"

"Will I what?" returned the farmer.

"Will you jop me? Make me work yet?"

"Oh, I see, you want a job," said his hearer. "Well, how much do you want a month?"

"I tell you. If you eat me on der farm I come for five dollars, but for twenty-five dollars I eat myself by Schmidt's home."—New York Evening Sun.

KILLED THE SPIDER.

Deadly Influence of a Small Magnet on the Insect.

An experiment made by a scientist to test the influence which a magnet will have on a spider is of interest. The magnet employed was a small steel one of the U shape, the legs of which were about two and a half inches long by one-half inch wide and one-sixth of an inch thick, the distance between the poles being about one-quarter of an inch.

Having noticed a small spider actively running along his armchair, he brushed it off upon the carpet, where it began to run, but was somewhat impeded by the roughness of the fabric. He now slid the magnet along the carpet, following after the spider, till the ends of the poles were within a quarter of an inch of it. The animal, without being touched, almost instantly stopped, and on withdrawing the magnet the spider continued on his journey.

The experimenter then placed the magnet within half an inch in front of the spider, and, withdrawing it slowly, the latter followed it in every direction which the magnet took, both in straight and circuitous routes.

Gradually, however, the spider became so strongly magnetized as to be immovable for several minutes, the magnetic influence seeming to lose its further power. On withdrawing the magnet altogether the spider began to recover somewhat.

The scientist ultimately placed a tumbler over the spider and the magnet, covering them both completely, and at the expiration of several minutes the spider, after a struggle to escape from the strong influence which the magnet exercised over it, was dead.—Exchange.

The Word Flattery.

At first sight there would appear to be little connection between flattery and the wagging of a dog's tail, yet in nearly all the northern language the same word signifies both, and flattery is certainly derived from the word signifying to wag the tail. In the old Norman *flagra* signifies to flatter and also to wag the tail. In Danish *logre* is to wag the tail, and *loger* for *cen* is to fawn on one. In Dutch *vleyden* is to flatter and *vleydsterten* is to wag the tail. In the old German *wedeln* is to wag the tail, and in English *wheelie* is to gain one's end in flattery.

Nothing Wasted.

A Scottish farmer when going to market, it was observed, always took a hen with him in his trap. The reason was never known until one day he took a friend with him on a drive. Every place the farmer stopped he put the nosebag on his horse, and then the hen was so trained that what dropped from the horse's bag the hen would pick up, so there was nothing wasted.—Pearson's Weekly.

Good Intentions.

"Don't trust too far to yoh good intentions," said Uncle Eben, "unless yoh has skill back of 'em. Good intentions satisfies de man what has 'em, but dey is de ruinment of a heap of choir music."—Washington Star.

A Buttonless Coat.

"Is there any kind of coat that never has any buttons on it?" asked a mission teacher of a class of newsboys.

"Yes, sir—a coat of paint" was the instantaneous reply.

Patriotism is not the mere holding of a great flag unfurled, but making it the goodliest in the world.—W. J. Linton.

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